

Summary of School IAQ Recommendations to the State Board of Health received by fax before the March 13, 2002 meeting and during public testimony at the meeting.

Compiled and categorized by Marianne Seifert, WSBOH staff.

Communication:

- Improve agency and school's communication with public, teachers, students, parents (open communication ideally)
- Improve interagency communication
- Develop risk communication plan

Knowledge/Capacity:

- Train local environmental health department staff and school facilities managers/staff in identifying and remediating IAQ problems
- Train local health officers in recognizing common IAQ health complaints
- Use existing materials/tools in schools and health departments: EPA Tools for Schools, DOH IAQ Best Practices Manual, OSPI & DOH Health and Safety Guide for K-12 Schools in Washington
- Educate primary care physicians in recognizing and treating common IAQ health symptoms
- Educate district's Independent Medical Examiner in recognizing common IAQ health symptoms

Funding Issues:

- Prioritize school health and safety in agency work plans and budgets
- Hire more IAQ personnel at local and state health departments and OSPI
- Allocate state emergency funds to testing and remediation at schools that need immediate attention
- Fund programs such as RENGRANT, OSPI assessment of state schools, School IAQ assessments by Rich Prill (WSU) and Dave Blake (NW Air Pollution Authority), and implementation of resulting IAQ improvement recommendations

Information:

- IAQ health complaints and medical records should be tracked in a central database
- Study the health effects of exposure to toxic molds
- Develop a health survey to be used in schools with IAQ complaints to identify how and how many children and teachers are effected, with community oversight
- Test schools using professional independent investigators, with community oversight

Facility Construction Issues:

- Use EPA Tools for Schools, DOH IAQ Best Practices Manual, OSPI & DOH Health and Safety Guide for K-12 Schools in Washington as essential components of core bid documents
- Include use of environmentally safe building materials (see DOH IAQ BPM) in architect and contractor specifications
- Review and evaluate architectural plans before they are put out to bid
- Stop awarding construction contracts to the lowest bidder
- Inspect facilities to ensure work is completed and enforce code violations
- Compile and maintain a database of contractors and construction companies with information on negligent work complaints and violations – hire competent companies

Facility Maintenance Issues:

- Do not allow construction and remediation while children are present
- Use competent professionals to remediate IAQ problems, with community oversight
- Use information from OSPI assessment of state schools, School IAQ assessments by Rich Prill (WSU) and Dave Blake (NW Air Pollution Authority), EPA Tools for Schools, DOH IAQ Best Practices Manual, OSPI & DOH Health and Safety Guide for K-12 Schools in Washington to improve facility maintenance

Regulatory Issues:

- Set building standards to ensure buildings are healthy and safe when built by lowest bidder
- Strengthen, implement and enforce WACs and RCWs
- Develop and set standards for mold exposure

Monitoring and Accountability:

- Identify and communicate criteria for school remediation and closure (using the # of teachers and students sick and/or environmental factors)
- Identify, communicate and improve the “chain of responsibility” and accountability within and among agencies to ensure that responses to school IAQ complaints are timely and protect health
- Include community oversight to ensure responses are adequate to ensure health and safety

Other:

- Compensate educators who have suffered economically and professionally in a fair and timely manner
- Pass legislation similar to California Senate Bill #732 and AB 284 to direct agencies to develop standards for mold exposure and to study the effects of toxic mold on health, and report their findings